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Merriam, C. H.—Bird migration.

—On a bird new to the Bermudas.

—List of birds ascertained to occur within ten miles from Point de Monts, Quebec, Canada.

—On a bird new to Northern South America.

—Gentry's Nests and birds of the United States.

—Ravages of a rare scolytid beetle in the sugar maples of Northeastern New York. Ext. Amer. Nat.

—Breeding of the harlequin duck (*Histrionicus minutus*). Ext. Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club.

—Remarks on some of the birds of Lewis county, Northern New York. Ext. Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club.

—A plea for the metric system in ornithology. From *The Auk*, Vol. I, 1884.

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GENERAL NOTES.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.¹

AFRICAN NOTES.—Capt. C. E. Gissing, R. N., has recently undertaken a journey inland from Mombasa, among the Wa-duruma and the Wa-teita, both of whom live in great dread of the Masai, who steal all the cattle they find, and kill their owners. The Wa-teita are rather undersized and are said to be very lazy, yet they live on mountain sides and summits, and cultivate the ground at the foot. The women do all the work, and carry fire-wood, utensils, etc., to the mountain top. Ndara, 4800 feet high, has a Wa-teita village at the top. This tribe are great robbers, but as they are armed only with bows and poisoned arrows, instead of spear, shield, and sword, they are always defeated by the Masai. Kasigao (5185 feet), has a village at 1500 feet elevation. In time of drought the natives of this part of the country sell their children as slaves to the coast people, but always redeem them in a favorable season. Although barbarous in their dealings with each other, they seem to have a horror of the regular slave trade as carried on by slave-dealing caravans.—Mr. O. Neill has discovered a lake (Lake Chiuta) to the north of Lake Shirwa, south of Nyassa. The climate of the highlands of this district (east of the Shiré) is said by Capt. Foot to be well suited to European constitutions, and adapted to wheat, oats, European vegetables, and coffee.—Lake Nyassa is becoming a busy inland sea. Two steamers ply upon it, and one upon the river Shire. There have been difficulties with the Makololo, owing to the death of their Chief Chipatula at the hands of an English elephant-hunter, but these seem likely to be settled by the efforts of Capt. Foot. On Lake Tanganyika there are now three steamers. The African Lakes Company has ten depots between Quillimane and Malawanda, on Nyassa, and from this point a practicable road has been carried to Pambete, on Tanganyika.—E. A. Floyer states that he rode from Wady Halfa to Debba, on the Nile, in

¹ This department is edited by W. N. LOCKINGTON, Philadelphia.

20¾ hours, and believes that the distance is not above 85 miles, and therefore is much exaggerated on the maps. A map of the Lower Congo, issued by the International Association, in July, 1883, shows the river as flowing 100 miles more to the west than it is marked in the best recent atlases.—Gen. J. H. Lefroi, in his presidential address to the geographical section of the British Association, stated that Dr. Pogge's account of the kingdom of the Muato Yanvo (not yet translated) proved that the people were much in advance of their cannibal neighbors of Kauanda. They practice circumcision, and are a fine warlike race, but addicted to slave-hunting. Since Dr. Pogge's visit Muata Yanvo has been deposed and poisoned by the "Lukokesha," or second in authority in the kingdom, who is one of his half-sisters. The Muata Yanvo is chosen principally by the Lukokesha, but must be a son of the former king.—The Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society for October give a list of 120 stations occupied by Europeans in Central Africa in 1884, with their latitude and longitude. Sixty-one of these are situated between the Equator and the Zambezi, east of 25° E. long., and fifty-nine west of longitude 25° E., between the equator and the Kuimén or Cunené. Twenty-six of the latter belong to the Belgian International Association, which has also four stations east of long. 25° E.—Through the letter of recommendation given by Sir John Kirk (British Agent at Zanzibar), who is in high favor with King Mandala, the ruler of Chagga, Mr. H. H. Johnston and his party are fed and clothed entirely at the cost of that potentate, who has given him a spot up the mountain (Kilimandjaro) where he can build a house and carry on his natural history work.—The Rev. W. P. Johnson has communicated to the Royal Geographical Society the result of seven years travels among the various tribes who inhabit the district east of Lake Nyassa, watered by the Lujenda and Rovuma and their tributaries. These streams rise east of the mountains which border the lake, and uniting in about 38° 10' E. Long., flow to the Indian ocean. The district watered by them appears to be thickly peopled by settled and intelligent tribes, but the Gwangwara, a Zulu tribe that were driven northward about 30 years ago, oppress and enslave them, and the slave trade flourishes. The mountains do not exceed 4000 feet in height.

AMERICAN NOTES.—Dr. C. v. den Steinen, a member of the German expedition to South Georgia, has recently descended the before unexplored Xingu to its junction with the Amazons.—Another German traveler, Dr. G. Steinmann, who remained in South America at the conclusion of the work of the expedition to observe the transit of Venus, has, says Petermann's *Mittheilungen*, crossed the Atacama desert and ascended the Licancaur volcano to a height of 5400 meters, 400 meters below its summit. Here he found traces of ancient settlements, and of a path

to the summit.—The Danish gunboat *Tylla* has returned to Orkney from a successful expedition of four months' duration, during which a scientific exploration of the inland glaciers of Greenland was effected, and meteorological observations taken along the coast as far north as 70° N. lat. Much dredging and trawling was done, the former to a depth of 900 fathoms, and many unknown species were obtained.—A new island, in the form of a rounded flattened cone of considerable size, was seen on July 26 by the lighthouse-keeper at Cape Reykjanes, the south-west point of Iceland. Several earthquake shocks had been felt during the preceding days. A large part of one side of the cone has since slipped or fallen down into the sea.—Mr. Whitely contributes to the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society an account of his journey to the foot of the flat-topped mountains, Roraima and Kukenam, in British Guiana. He reckons the direct vertical sides of the latter (above the sloping part) at 1000 feet, and declares that its ascent seems impossible except by balloon. The vertical part of the Roraima seems rather less, and there is a break by which ascent may be possible.—A report of considerable interest has been received from the Danish Expedition to East Greenland, dated Namortalik, March, 1884. Namortalik has thirty turf-covered houses, including a brewery and a bakery, also a Lutheran mission, a church, and a school. It is on an island, surrounded by several others, which are visited by the natives for seals and eider-duck. The whole southern part of Greenland is a region of wild mountains, rising in peaks to nearly 8000 feet. Close to Namortalik is the Tasermiut fjord, some 50 miles long, with a most luxuriant vegetation in summer, and with heat and mosquitos enough to make one fancy himself in the tropics.—The observations of Axel Hamberg, hydrographer of the recent expedition of Baron Nordenskjöld to Greenland, are of the highest interest. Through Denmark sound, between Iceland and Greenland, flows a warm current, washing the western and northern shores of Iceland, and a cold polar current. The latter, throughout its whole course between 66° N. lat. and Cape Farewell, flows upon warm water. Its depth seems to increase with the depth of the sea, and its surface water is less salt than that of the warm current, which is thus specifically the heavier. The quantity of ice on the east coast diminishes in spring and summer, and, according to numerous observations made by Danish settlers and navigators on the south coast of Greenland, the polar drift-ice appears there in May, June and July, whereas in November, December, January and February there is no ice. Mr. Hamberg believes, therefore, that the polar current is at its maximum in spring, diminishes in force during summer, and is insignificant in autumn and winter. He hints that Nordenskjöld owed his comparative success in reaching the east coast to the fact that he chose September instead of an earlier

month, and suggests that an attempt made in October or November would be still more successful.

ASIATIC NOTES.—*The Upper Oxus.* Mr. R. Michell (Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc., Sept., 1884) gives an account of Karateghin and Darwaz, regions situated on the upper course of the Oxus. Karateghin occupies the middle course of the Kizyl-see or Surkhhab, the largest tributary of the Oxus; while Darwaz, to the south of Karateghin, lies upon the Panj or main Upper Oxus and upon the Hing-ab, a tributary of the Surkhhab. These two Bokharian provinces are walled in by snow-capped mountains ten to eighteen thousand feet high, and can only be entered by ways passing over the most difficult passes. Karateghin consists of a series of hollows or expansions in the valley of the Surkhhab, and each of these expansions gives evidence, from its terraced clayey sides, that it was once a lake. The smaller basins are separated by mountain spurs. Grain and fruits of the temperate climes grow in abundance in this elevated valley. The Tadjiks of Karateghin claim to be descended from the soldiers of Alexander's army, and Mr. Michell believes that the hereditary chiefs may really be so descended, but suggests that the Tadjiks themselves may be the descendants of the ancient Bactrians. The principal valley of Darwaz is the grassy and fruitful vale of the Hing-ab, whither, spite of the asperity of the roads, immense herds of cattle are driven every year from Hissar to graze.—Another well-to-do valley is that of the Saghri-Dasht, a tributary of the Hing-ab. The valley of the Panj itself has little cultivable land, but in it stands Kila-Khumb, the residence of the Bek of Darwaz. At the south-east limit of Darwaz is an impassable gorge, separating it from Roshan, which belongs to Afghanistan. Sir Hy. Rawlinson stated that Roshan was the exact Oriental rendering of Roxana, and it was here that the Bactrian chief, Oxyartes, the father of Roxana, had his residence. The Tadjik has straight, fine black hair, and deep-set, lively black eyes, and is thus quite different from the Uzbeg Tartars.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.—Mr. C. Winnecke has explored a part of central North Australia near the western boundary of Queensland, as far as $136^{\circ} 46''$ E. long. He has discovered various minor lakes and mountains and one river, the Hay, a feeder of the Marshall, but the general aspect of the country is that of a waterless desert of spinifex and low scrub, except in the valleys of the rivers, where there is grass and also gum and box trees. Eighty-five species of plants were collected, several of them new to science.—A recent work by an Austrian Slav enumerates the "Yongo slaves" or southern Slavs at 12 millions, without counting the four millions of Bulgarians. The Slavonian provinces of Austria, including Bosnia and Herzegovina contain eleven millions of Slavs. Counting Russians, Poles and Czechs, the Slavonians of Europe reach 100 millions.